



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

"Dutch Landscape"
Fac-simile of a
Crayon drawing by
HARRY
WILLIAMSON



MODERN DUTCH ARTISTS



MODERN DUTCH ART is represented by the work of eight men of the first rank and a number of excellent artists of less ability. Of course, there are many daubers, but not so many as in most other countries.

The eight men who stand for Dutch art are :

Israels,	Neuhuys,
Mettling,	James Maris,
Mauve,	William Maris,
Bosboom,	Matthew Maris.

It is remarkable that while each of the eight is wholly different from the others, yet together they stand for one thing in art. There is something about the work of each to stamp it as Dutch; what that something is it is difficult to say. Perhaps it is a perfect sincerity and truth, a total absence of cleverness and shallow prettiness. Whatever it is they all have it and that is true of no other nation's art. French and American art especially do not seem to be bound by any inward tie in this way. Scattering here and there in the field of art these devotees run after any butterfly they see and there is no steady movement toward a great end.

Modern Dutch art is, on the contrary, the direct natural descendant of the old Dutch masters. They were content to paint what they saw about them, treating subjects like the "Descent from the Cross," or the "Transfiguration," with a truth to the effects of nature which Raphael and Murillo despised. Yet, what poor radiance is the heavenly light of Raphael's "Sistine Madonna" compared with the golden splendor of the setting sun in Rembrandt's "Night Watch." So modern Dutch art finds its inspiration in the beauty of nature and in homely surroundings.

Josef Israels

A peasant girl sitting in a perfectly simple, unstriking position, knitting, is subject enough for a life size painting by Israels. The light on her face and bare arms, the firm flesh and its

tender color, are sufficient motives for painting her. Israels is one of the few good painters who "tell a story." He paints many sad scenes from the life of the peasants and there is a tender human feeling about his pictures that appeals to all alike. The picture called "Nothing More," is a death-bed scene, where the sorrow of the single mourner is wonderfully expressed in his bent body.

In another, of children sailing a wooden shoe in the pools left by the tide on the beach, there is much sympathy with child life. The picture would appeal at once to any lover of children. But the real greatness of Israels is not in the sentiment at all. How often pictures as good as his in sentiment have been painted by nobodies and how seldom has *any one* given nature as truly as he does. Israels is like Rembrandt in his love of a rich dark background with the light of tender flesh, warm and luminous, coming out of it, all wrapped in an atmosphere of its own. The dark interior of a low-ceilinged peasant-house is still light enough to see into. There is no black; no spot on the canvas surface stops the eye.

Israels is generally considered the best Dutch figure painter. But in some respects he is surpassed by Albert Neuhuys, a man who originally copied him.

James Maris, the eldest of three brothers, is counted by many competent judges the greatest landscape painter alive. His landscapes are remarkable for power and depth of color. His color seems to balance back and forth from warm to cool and make such subtle tone gradations as the sun, the source of all color, does in nature.

Incidentally, his choice of subjects is so happy that even in reproduction his pictures are among the most interesting.

William Maris, the youngest, is known as one of the best cattle painters living. He treats cattle as part of the landscape, which he paints almost as well as his brother James.

As they stand in the water of the canal among the reeds which grow along the dyke, the cows give interest to the stretch

**MODERN
DUTCH
ARTISTS**

*By an art
student from
The Hague.
Written in
December, 1890.*

of low, flat country; the sun sparkles like gold on the cresses which lie on the water, and makes the black, white and red cows rich and full of color, while the broken touches of grass on the clods of dark purple earth of the dyke give a delicious freshness to the whole. William Maris is a typical Dutch artist, and his life is not unlike that of all the noted men who congregate at The Hague. I was often at his home and was impressed by his great simplicity and happiness. There was a garden at the rear of his modest dwelling at Geestbrück—a suburb of The Hague—and in the evening he would sit there under a big tree and drink tea with his many guests, who dropped in any time and were always welcome. At the foot of the garden was a small arm of one of the omnipresent canals, and on its bank was a pen filled with ducks and ducklings, which Maris paints as no one else has ever done. The pure soft white of the old ones, and the downy yellow of the young were beautiful in the mass of green bank, overhanging willows, and their reflection in the clear, oily-looking water. William Maris is one of the happiest of men. He is loved by every one who knows him. The children in the neighborhood treat him as a father and his patience with them is unlimited. It is this natural, happy life and entire devotion to art, the rule among the Dutch, which makes Dutch art pre-eminent for naturalness and sincerity.

Anton Mauve

Anton Mauve is equal to the best painters of any country in modern times. He paints landscapes, cattle, sheep and figures equally well. He is entirely different from any other artist.

Bosboom

Bosboom is another quite separate man in art. No other modern painter of note attempts the subjects from which he paints such beautiful pictures. He paints almost exclusively cathedral interiors and his easy grasp of the great spaces and masses of wall enables him to give them interest in color, light, atmosphere and quality. And it is in the big masses only that the beauty lies for him. Figures are only accessory and very small. A good many of the old painters attempted the same thing, but none

*He was different
from all others,
but scores of
imitators have
made his style
common.*

of them succeeded in getting rid of the evidence of labor in the difficult drawings and the observer takes no pleasure in their matter-of-fact elaboration of the architecture.

**MODERN
DUTCH
ARTISTS**

Albert Neuhuys is not far below the old Dutchmen who produced the art of the kitchen and pot-house which George Eliot describes so well in "Middlemarch." Compared with Israel's, he has more decision and less feeling. His painting is firm, free and usually good in color.

Albert Neuhuys

Mettling is one of the best living portrait, or rather, head painters; for his work is chiefly interesting as subtle, coloristic flesh painting in light and shade and not as portraiture. His portraits may not be good likenesses, but they are masterly in style and color and are much sought for by collectors in this country, England and Scotland.

Mettling

The man whom some regard as the greatest Dutch artist, but who is the least understood of all modern painters, is Matthew Maris. He is one of three remarkable brothers, all in the first rank of art. In their youth they all studied nature in much the same way, working earnestly and advancing step by step, with no attempt at smartness. Matthew was a child prodigy. I saw two pieces of still life painted when he was fourteen, which were equal to some of the best things of the kind in any gallery. He went to England—where he still remains—and developed rapidly into a landscape painter of great originality and strength. No one ever painted the effects he chose and no one ever got the blinding sunlight or grey mist as he did.

Matthew Maris

But his genius has since led him into a very different field. He seems to have outgrown his love of nature's exterior and to have become immersed in a sea of strange, weird, poetic fancy. He paints life size pictures of fauns, satyrs and gods in a dreamy gray mist which allows no decided form to be seen, and in consequence he is sneered at by students and older men who are set in their ideas, to say nothing of utter lack of appreciation by the public. But he spends great time and his best energy in

**MODERN
DUTCH
ARTISTS**

producing these strange things, which have a wonderful power of drawing the beholder back and compelling him to study them. He paints small classic heads surrounded by this same mysterious atmosphere, and landscapes by moonlight which are so unreal and fleeting as to seem at first only a confused mist, but once you get into them they have a grand feeling of the immensity and silence of night. The stars are up so high and space is expressed so well though so incomprehensibly, that you feel the awe which nature inspires.

*Almost no one
understands him.
Many think him
deranged.*

To an outsider his work looks careless and easily done. One picture of a girl in a white communion veil, which I saw at Mesdag's house in The Hague, looked so slight in execution, even poorly drawn, that it was hard to believe he had worked at it a year, yet such was the case.

Conclusion These are the present representatives of Dutch art. There are many very good painters besides, who do not, however, deserve to be ranked with them.

Mesdag has for years painted marine subjects off the Scheveningen coast which are more thought of in Germany, England and America than in Holland. He is a wealthy, retired merchant and has one of the finest private collections of modern pictures in Europe, to which he adds with all the money his own popular pictures bring.

Tholen is one of the younger men of great promise. He is already well known in this country. Weisenbach is one of the best painters in water-colors. Kever is also a fine artist.

Artz is a very popular painter and is better than popular painters usually are. He is a prominent man of affairs among artists, usually being chairman of the Holland department in large exhibitions. He is a very affable gentleman and has one of the finest studios in The Hague.

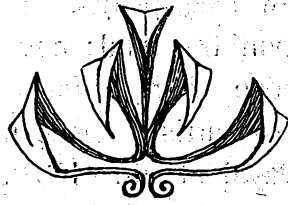
The exception that proves the rule in the matter of Dutch art is Kaemmerer, one of the most widely known of contemporary artists. His pictures are reproduced everywhere and sent into

every city of civilization. He was born in The Hague but has spent nearly all his life in Paris. His style is the Frenchiest of the French. Fortuny was not more dazzling in style or treatment.

MODERN
DUTCH
ARTISTS

Alma-Tadema, the popular English artist, is also a native of Holland, but both of these men are entirely distinct from Dutch art. The first is in everything but birth a Frenchman and the second English, and their faults are not to be laid at the door of the most artistic people, so far as painting is concerned, in ancient or modern times.

HARRY WILLIAMSON



"Our eyes are trained to scrutiny from childhood. We are all looking for holes in people's elbows and dust on their coat-collars. It is the mean, ordinary way of looking at human nature. We who paint must not use our eyes so because they *can* be so used! If the coat *is* greasy it may be beautiful when painted."

From
WILLIAM M.
HUNT'S
talks
to his
students

✦
"Put in what you need to express the thing! *Everything* is beautiful! That's what's the matter! People wouldn't see the beauty of this floor, with its light and shade and color. They would only see dirt and spots."

✦
"Ah! these great men! Their life was one prayer! They did nothing but their work; cared only for what they were doing, and how little the world knows of them!"